DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 406 015 PS 025 233

AUTHOR Clawson, Mellisa A.
TITLE Children's Day Care Experiences: Differences by Age, Gender, and Type of Program.
PUB DATE Apr 97
NOTE 20p.; Paper presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development (62nd, Washington, DC, April 3-6, 1997). For a related paper, see PS 025 232.
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Age Differences; Caregiver Child Relationship; Child Caregivers; Class Size; Comparative Analysis; Day Care; *Day Care Centers; Interviews; *Nonprofit Organizations; Observation; *Preschool Children; Preschool Education; *Sex Differences; Teacher Qualifications; Teacher Student Ratio; Teacher Student Relationship
IDENTIFIERS *Day Care Quality

ABSTRACT

This study examined how children's experience of regulatable quality and teacher-child interaction differs between nonprofit and for-profit day care settings. Gender and age differences in children's day care experiences were also explored. Assessments of regulatable quality and teacher-child interaction were conducted in three for-profit and two nonprofit centers serving, respectively, 122 and 72 children age 36 to 71 months. Data collection included classroom observations and teacher interviews. Regulatable quality variables included teacher-child ratio, class size, and teacher qualifications. Teacher-child interaction was assessed with respect to rate, content, and affective tone. Results indicated that: (1) older children experienced day care environments of higher quality in terms of both regulatable features and teacher-child interaction; (2) boys' environments were less optimal than girls' with respect to teacher-child interaction; and (3) nonprofit centers had higher levels of regulatable quality and positive, meaningful teacher-child interactions compared to for-profit centers. (Contains 24 references.) (Author/KDFB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED 406 015

Children's Day Care Experiences: Differences by Age, Gender, and Type of Program

Mellisa A. Clawson

Syracuse University

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Mellisa A. Clawson
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Paper presented at the biennial meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Washington D.C., April, 1997. Correspondence may be sent to the author at the Department of Child and Family Studies, 202 Slocum Hall, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY 13244-1250 or e-mail: maclawso@mailbox.syr.edu.

PS 025233

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to examine how children's experiences of regulatable quality and teacher-child interaction differ between nonprofit and for-profit settings. Gender and age differences in children's day care experiences also were explored. Assessments of regulatable quality and teacher-child interaction were conducted in 3 for-profit and 2 nonprofit centers, serving 122 and 72 preschool-age children, respectively. Results indicated that (a) older children experienced day care environments of higher quality in terms of both regulatable features and teacher-child interaction, (b) boys' environments were less optimal than girls' with respect to teacher-child interaction, and (c) nonprofit centers were characterized by higher levels of regulatable quality and positive, meaningful teacher-child interactions, compared to for-profit centers.

Previous research suggests that children's day care experiences vary depending on center auspices. Nonprofit, compared to for-profit centers, are characterized by higher levels of regulatable quality. Specifically, nonprofit centers consistently have been found to have more favorable staff-child ratios, particularly in classrooms serving preschool-age children (Coelen, Glantz, & Calore, 1979; Kagan & Newton, 1989; Keyserling, 1972; Whitebook, Howes, & Phillips, 1990). A less consistent finding concerns class size. Whereas some studies suggest that nonprofit settings have smaller classes, others indicate few significant sectoral differences (Kagan, 1991). Furthermore, both for-profit and nonprofit settings have been found to exceed Federal Interagency Day Care Regulations (FIDCR) in terms of class size (Coelen et al., 1979). Teacher qualifications also are considered an important index of high regulatable quality, although findings are mixed with regard to the levels of education, training, and experience of teachers in nonprofit versus for-profit settings (Kagan, 1991).

A second component of day care quality is relatively more process-oriented and concerns the interaction occurring between teachers and children. Certain characteristics of teacher-child interaction, including rate, content, and affective style, are associated with children's outcomes. Specifically, meaningful and positive interaction that occurs frequently between teachers and children facilitates children's cognitive, language, and socioemotional development (McCartney, 1984; Phillips, McCartney, & Scarr, 1987). Previous research suggests that nonprofit centers have environments that are more child-sensitive and comfortable (Kagan & Newton, 1989); however, the specific characteristics of teachers' interactions with children in each setting have not been adequately addressed. Therefore, the purpose of the present study was to examine how children's experiences in nonprofit versus for-profit day care settings vary in terms of regulatable quality and teacher-child interaction.

In addition to influences specific to the type of program, day care experiences may be affected by characteristics of children themselves. That is, day care environments may differ depending on the ages of children in the classroom served. Large group activities, for example, have been found to be used more frequently with older children (Dickinson & Smith, 1991). Furthermore, boys and girls may experience

different day care environments. Previous research suggests that teachers tend to use disciplinary techniques more often with boys than girls (Fagot, 1984; Steinkamp, 1990). A second purpose of this study, then, was to explore gender and age differences in children's day care experiences.

Method

Subjects

Subjects were 122 children (56 girls) recruited from three for-profit centers and 72 children (37 girls) recruited from 2 nonprofit centers. Data were collected in classrooms serving children 36- to 47-months of age (n = 69), 48- to 59- months of age (n = 90), and 60- to 71-months of age (n = 35).

Procedure

Data collection took place in the form of classroom observations and teacher interviews. Regulatable quality variables included teacher-child ratio and class size, both of which were averaged for each child over a possible 200 rounds of classroom observation, and teacher qualifications, assessed during interviews in which teachers provided information about educational, training, and experiential backgrounds. Scores for all teachers in a given classroom were averaged to yield an overall teacher qualifications score for the children in that classroom.

Teacher-child interaction was assessed with respect to rate, content, and affective tone experienced by each child over 100 rounds. The rate of interaction was calculated as the total number of interactions the child experienced divided by the number of rounds s/he was present. Interaction content was coded as the one category (see Table 1) reflecting its dominant theme. Teacher-child interaction also was coded with regard to teachers' affective tone during the exchange; categories included positive (i.e., warm and friendly), negative (i.e., hostile or irritable), or neutral (i.e., flat or inexpressive). Ratio scores for the three types of affect then were created for each child.

Table 1

Description of Categories of Teacher-Child Interaction

Caregiving	Teacher takes care of child's physical needs.
Instruction	Teacher gives a lesson or teaches child how to do something.
Conversation	Teacher expresses opinions or feelings or holds a discussion.
Social Facilitation	Teacher encourages cooperation or addresses social situations.
Play	Teacher initiates or engages in play activity.
Control	Teacher uses disciplinary techniques, such as time-out or verbal warnings.

Results

Descriptive Statistics for Regulatable Quality and Teacher-Child Interaction

Regulatable quality. Regulatable quality was represented by the variables teacher qualifications, class size, and teacher-child ratio. The teacher qualifications score was the average of all teachers in a given classroom and included years of experience in the field of day care, specialized training in child development and care, and level of educational attainment. Differences in each of these specific variables were found with respect to teachers' race (means listed in Table 2). African-American teachers were more likely to have over three years of experience in the field, compared to 12-months or less for white teachers, $\chi^2(2, N = 46) = 17.13, p < .001$. African-American teachers also were more likely than white teachers to have had supervised training experiences, $\chi^2(1, N = 45) = 4.06, p < .05$. White teachers were more likely to have received a four-year college degree, while African-American teachers were more likely to have received a 2-year college degree or C.D.A. certification, $\chi^2(2, N = 43) = 22.33, p < .001$). These differences may be due in part to type of program; that is, African-American teachers were more likely than white teachers to work in nonprofit centers, $\chi^2(1, N = 46) = 11.53, p < .001$. Further analyses revealed that there were differences in the specific teacher variables that distinguished nonprofit from for-profit centers

Table 2

Teacher Qualifications

	Teacher Race		Type of Program	
	White	African-American	Nonprofit	For-profit
Education				
High school	8	3	3	8
2-year college	3	11	9	5
4-year college	18	0	6	12
Training				
No training	21	5	5	21
Training	10	9	13	6
Experience				
12 months	18	1	5	14
1 - 3 years	10	3	2	11
Over 3 years	4	10	12	2

(means listed in Table 3). For example, teachers in nonprofit centers were more likely to have had supervised training, $\chi^2(1, N = 45) = 11.07$, $p < .001$, and over three years of experience in day care, $\chi^2(2, N = 46) = 16.75$, $p < .001$, compared to teachers working in for-profit programs. No difference in level of education was apparent between teachers in nonprofit versus for-profit settings. Additionally, no differences were found between full- versus part-time and lead versus assistant teachers in terms of these variables.

The overall teacher qualifications score ranged from .50 to 3.75, with a mean of 2.27 for the full sample (means listed in Table 3). This score was correlated with child age ($r = .37$, $p < .001$), indicating that older children were more likely to be taught by more highly qualified teachers.

Table 3:

Ranges, Means, and Significant Correlations with Child Age

	Min	Max	Mean	r
Regulatable Quality				
Class size	9.51	24.33	15.15	.48
Teacher-child ratio	.06	.21	.13	-.21
Teacher qualifications	.50	3.75	2.27	.37
Teacher-Child Interaction				
Rate	.06	.84	.50	
Instruction	2.00	53.00	17.87	
Conversation	1.00	33.00	11.58	.32
Custodial care	.00	10.00	2.04	-.30
Play	.00	12.00	2.75	
Social facilitation	.00	8.00	1.08	
Control	.00	20.00	5.34	-.17
Positive teacher affect	.24	10.25	1.26	.19
Negative teacher affect	.00	.19	.03	-.19
Neutral teacher affect	.10	3.75	1.19	-.32

Raw scores for class size ranged from 5 to 46 children, whereas the average class size per child (i.e., the average class size across the total number of observation rounds the child was present) ranged from 9.51 to 24.33 children, with a mean of 15.15. Average class size was positively associated with child age ($r = .48$, $p < .001$), which suggests that older children were more likely to be in larger classes.

The raw scores reflecting the number of teachers in the classroom during a given round of observation ranged from 0 to 7. The average number of teachers per child (i.e., the average number of

teachers across the total number of rounds the child was present during observations) ranged from 1.02 to 2.61 with a mean of 1.83. Additionally, the average number of teachers score was positively associated with child age ($r = .25$, $p < .001$). Teacher-child ratios (average number of teachers score divided by the average class size score) ranged from .06 (ratio = 1:16.67) to .21 (ratio = 1:4.76) with a mean of .13 (ratio = 1:7.69). Teacher-child ratio was negatively correlated with child age ($r = -.21$, $p < .01$), suggesting that ratios were lower (i.e., more favorable) in classrooms serving younger children.

Teacher-child interaction. Teacher-child interaction included overall rate, positive, negative, and neutral teacher affect, and content of interaction, categorized as instruction, conversation, social facilitation, play, custodial care, and control. Rates of interaction (i.e., the total number of interactions a child received divided by the number of rounds he/she was actually present) ranged from .06 to .84 with a mean of .50 for the total sample. Rate of interaction was not significantly correlated with child age.

Each interaction was evaluated in terms of teachers' positive, negative, and neutral affect, and ratio scores were created reflecting each of these affective tones. Ratios of positive affect ranged from .24 to 10.25 with a mean of 1.26. Positive affect was significantly correlated with child age ($r = .19$, $p < .001$), suggesting that older children received higher levels of positive affect from teachers. Negative affect ratios ranged from 0 to .19 with a mean of .03 for the total sample, indicating that relatively low levels of negative affect were demonstrated by teachers. Ratios of negative affect were negatively correlated with child age ($r = -.19$, $p < .001$), suggesting that younger children received more negative affect than older children. Ratios for neutral teacher affect ranged from .10 to 3.75 with a mean of 1.19. Additionally, neutral teacher affect was inversely related to child age ($r = -.32$, $p < .001$), which suggests that younger children received higher levels of neutral affect compared to older children.

Of the categories of teacher-child interaction, instruction and conversation occurred most frequently, followed by control, play, custodial care, and social facilitation (means listed in Table 3). In order to examine possible differences in these interaction categories by type of program and gender, a multivariate analysis of variance was performed using child age as a covariate. A main effect was found

for the covariate, F (6, 161) = 13.83, $p < .001$, and correlations indicated that child age was positively associated with conversation ($r = .32$, $p < .001$) and negatively associated with control ($r = -.17$, $p < .05$) and custodial care ($r = -.30$, $p < .001$). Main effects for type of program, F (6, 161) = 30.71, $p < .001$, and gender, F (6, 161) = 3.32, $p < .01$) also were found. No other effects were significant. Follow-up univariate F-tests indicated that children in nonprofit programs received higher levels of custodial care, F (1, 169) = 6.53, $p < .05$ (mean of nonprofit = 2.54; mean of for-profit = 1.73), conversation, F (1, 169) = 50.39, $p < .001$ (mean of nonprofit = 15.44; mean of for-profit = 9.16), and instruction, F (1, 169) = 110.40, $p < .001$ (mean of nonprofit = 25.77; mean of for-profit = 12.91), compared to children attending for-profit programs. Additionally, boys received more control interactions than girls, F (1, 169) = 10.64, $p < .001$ (mean for boys = 6.21; mean for girls = 4.42).

To reduce this set of variables, a principle components analysis was conducted, and a three component solution best fit the data. The first factor consisted of high loadings for the variables custodial care (.60), conversation (.69), and instruction (.81). This factor represented traditional teacher-child interaction because it was composed of types of interaction in which teachers commonly engage with children. The second factor consisted of high loadings for play (.66) and social facilitation (.85) and represented socially-oriented teacher-child interaction. The only positive loading on the third factor was control (.74), thus identifying a factor representing controlling teacher-child interaction. Regression weighted factor scores were calculated using the algorithms present in the SPSS program. Each child, then, received scores for traditional, socially-oriented, and controlling teacher-child interactions. None of these scores was significantly correlated with child age.

Differences by Gender and Type of Program

A series of multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVAs) were computed in order to examine the multivariate differences between type of program (i.e., nonprofit versus for-profit) and gender within each of the dimensions. Because of the numerous associations found between predictor variables and child age, child age was used as a covariate in these analyses, while type of program and gender were between-groups

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

factors. In the first MANOVA, program and gender differences were examined as a function of the regulatable quality variables of class size, teacher-child ratio, and teacher qualifications. This analysis revealed main effects for the covariate child age, F (3, 182) = 80.63, $p < .001$, and type of program, F (3, 182) = 105.86, $p < .001$). There were no other significant effects. Follow-up univariate tests indicated that compared to children in for-profit programs, children attending nonprofit programs experienced smaller class sizes, F (1, 184) = 31.82, $p < .001$ (mean of nonprofit = 13.57; mean of for-profit = 16.06), more favorable teacher-child ratios, F (1, 184) = 108.29, $p < .001$ (mean of nonprofit = .15 or 1:6.67; mean of for-profit = .11 or 1:9.09), and teachers with higher qualifications, F (1, 184) = 239.58, $p < .001$ (mean of nonprofit = 3.18; mean of for-profit = 1.74).

In the second MANOVA, the teacher-child interaction variables of overall rate of interaction, ratios of positive, negative, and neutral teacher affect, and the three factor scores based on the categories of interaction were the dependent variables. This analysis revealed main effects for the covariate child age, F (7, 160) = 5.67, $p < .001$ and type of program, F (7, 160) = 37.21, $p < .001$. No other effects were statistically significant. Follow-up univariate analyses indicated that children in nonprofit centers received higher overall rates of interaction, F (1, 166) = 92.14, $p < .001$ (mean of nonprofit = .62; mean of for-profit = .42), and higher levels of positive teacher affect, F (1, 166) = 12.67, $p < .001$ (mean of nonprofit = 1.75; mean of for-profit = .95), and traditional teacher-child interaction, F (1, 166) = 122.70, $p < .001$ (mean of nonprofit = .82, mean of for-profit = -.52), compared to children in for-profit centers.

Conclusions

Descriptive Summaries of Regulatable Quality, Teacher-Child Interaction, Teacher-Child Relationship, and Social Competence

Regulatable quality. The children in this study experienced a range of regulatable quality, which was assessed as the number of children in a class, the ratio of teachers to children, and the qualifications of the teaching staff. Wide variation was evident in class sizes and the number of teachers present in the classroom. Observers noted that classes often were combined for joint activities, such as outdoor play or

watching a videotape, which resulted in very large class sizes (e.g., over 40 children). Classes also were divided into small learning groups, and consequently, class sizes occasionally were less than eight children. Average class sizes (i.e., class size scores for each child across all rounds of observation) ranged from 10 to 24, suggesting that some children regularly experienced class sizes that were relatively large. In addition, younger children were more likely than older children to be in larger classes. Small class sizes may make it easier for teachers to provide the high level of individualized physical care that young children often require. Alternatively, day care environments for older children may be structured to be more school-like, and as such, are characterized by larger class sizes and teacher-led activities tailored for large groups (e.g., lectures or group lessons).

Variation also was evident in terms of the teacher-child ratios experienced by children. Although observers noted several instances in which no teacher was present in the classroom, children did not regularly experience a classroom setting without an adult present. Less favorable ratios were more likely in classes for older children, which may reflect an assumption that older children do not require as much individualized assistance from adults as younger children. Low teacher-child ratios also may not be seen as necessary in a school-like environment with high levels of teacher-led group activities, which appears to be a more common classroom structure for older children.

Teacher qualifications ranged from very low levels of experience, education, and training to relatively high levels. Interestingly, overall teacher qualifications were associated with child age, indicating that older children experienced care from more highly qualified teachers in terms of educational and training background and overall experience as a day care provider. Perhaps the more highly qualified teacher is assigned to classrooms serving older children with the expectation that she is better equipped to provide preparatory experiences for kindergarten. Caregivers for younger children, in contrast, may be seen as "babysitters" who are providing care that anyone can do, and, therefore, careful selection and training are not viewed as necessary (Lally, 1995).

Teacher-child interaction. Teacher-child interaction was assessed in terms of rate, affective tone, and content. On average, interaction with the teacher occurred in 50% of the rounds a child was present, although wide variation in rates of interaction was apparent. As in previous research (e.g., Honig, Caldwell, & Tannenbaum, 1970), child age was not associated with the rate of interaction.

Children experienced a range of affective styles from teachers, and these were categorized as positive, neutral, or negative. As in other studies (e.g., Innes, Banspach, & Woodman, 1982; Tizard, Cooperman, Joseph, & Tizard, 1972), negative teacher affect occurred relatively infrequently. These findings suggest that while, fortunately, teachers regularly do not react to children with irritability, it is not uncommon for them to display an emotional tone that is flat or matter-of-fact. Variability in affective tone may occur as teachers' interactions with some children are more positive than with others (Elicker & Fortner-Wood, 1995). In the present study, for example, teachers were more likely to display higher levels of friendliness and warmth to older children. Perhaps teachers are better able to engage older children, who have developed more advanced cognitive, language, and social skills in activities and discussions that are pleasant and rewarding for both parties. Higher levels of physical care are necessary with younger children, and if teachers find caretaking tedious, they may be more likely to display bland or even irritable emotional tones.

Of the categories of interaction, instruction and conversation occurred most often. Previous research suggests that teachers are likely to engage in behaviors such as these that support children's cognitive and social development (Dickinson & Smith, 1991; File, 1984; Howes, 1983). The prominence of certain types of interaction varied by child age and gender. Specifically, younger children experienced more interactions focusing on caregiving and discipline, whereas teachers engaged older children in higher levels of conversation. These findings are similar to those of Pellegrino and Scopesi (1990) who suggested that teachers' interactions may reflect variation in children's developmental levels. Given the limitations of younger children in terms of language development, teachers may choose to engage them in fewer

conversations, compared to older children who have developed the language skills to engage in discussions that are relatively more complex.

Interaction differed by gender in that boys received more control interactions than girls. Teachers' more frequent use of disciplinary techniques with boys rather than girls has been documented in other studies (Fagot, 1984; Steinkamp, 1990). Perhaps boys are more likely to behave in ways that elicit controlling interactions from adults (Block, 1976; Jacklin & Macoby, 1978). Alternatively, it may be that teachers are more sensitized to respond to the noncompliance of boys rather than girls (Honig & Wittmer, 1982).

Factor analysis of the six discrete interaction categories yielded three general styles of interaction. Traditional interaction was characterized by three behaviors in which teachers typically engage; these included teaching or instructing, talking or conversing, and providing basic care. Previous research indicates that didactic, conversational, and physical caregiving interactions occur more frequently than other teacher behaviors, including playing with children and using disciplinary techniques (Dickinson & Smith, 1991; Howes, 1983; Tizard et al., 1976). Socially-oriented interaction referred to teachers' assistance in children's social encounters (e.g., encouraging children to share) and play with children. Neither social facilitation nor play occurred as frequently as other types of interaction. It may be that the current ideology among day care teachers holds that play and peer interaction should be child-directed, therefore, teachers may not engage in these behaviors as often as they might (Tizard et al., 1976). Control, the third factor, referred to disciplinary actions, which mainly consisted of verbal warnings and placing a child in time-out. Observers noted a number of instances in which teachers could have used social facilitation ("Let's take turns with this toy"), but instead opted for control ("Since you won't share, you have to sit in time-out"). Scenarios such as this raise the possibility that control may be overused by teachers, despite its infrequent occurrence relative to some other types of interaction (Innes et al., 1982; Tizard et al., 1976).

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Differences between Types of Programs

As expected based on previous research, nonprofit fared better than for-profit programs in terms of regulatable quality and teacher-child interaction. Concerning regulatable quality, children in nonprofit centers experienced smaller class sizes, more favorable teacher-child ratios, and more highly qualified teachers, compared to children in for-profit centers. These results are in accord with previous research documenting higher levels of regulatable quality in nonprofit versus for-profit day care settings in terms of these variables (Coelen et al., 1979; Kagan & Newton, 1989; Keyserling, 1972; Whitebook et al., 1990) and global assessments of quality (Kontos & Stremmel, 1988).

Examination of teaching qualifications indicated that educational levels, training backgrounds, and length of experience in the field of day care differed by race and type of program. Specifically, African-American teachers and those in nonprofit programs were more likely to have had supervised training in child development and care and to have worked in the day care field for over three years. The Connecticut Profit and Quality Study (Kagan & Newton, 1989) and the National Child Care Staffing Study (NCCSS, Whitebook et al., 1989) also document that teachers in nonprofit centers tend to have more overall experience and training, compared to teachers in for-profit settings. With regard to level of educational attainment, more African-American teachers, who were more likely to work in nonprofit settings, had received a two year Associate (A.S.) degree or C.D.A., whereas more white teachers had received four-year college degrees. These findings may be due in part to possible confounding between education and training. For example, supervised training is required for both C.D.A. certification and completion of the A.S. in Child Development and Care offered locally to these centers, but is not necessarily required for a four-year college degree.

These differences between nonprofit and for-profit programs raise the question of how program type influences regulatable quality. Two explanations for the differences have been put forth. The first is Hansmann's (1980) "contract failure" theory, which suggests that in for-profit centers, the consumer lacks the means for evaluating contract fulfillment, resulting in the opportunity for exploitation. Because the

parent is not consistently present and the child is not qualified, no one evaluates the quality of services rendered, and for-profit programs, which are by definition motivated to increase profits, therefore are more likely to cut their own costs by reducing quality. A nonprofit program, however, is unlikely to exploit the consumer because it does not distribute profits to those who control the organization. Hansmann's (1980) theory suggests that parents must be available to evaluate the quality of their children's care to ensure that the implied contract is maintained (Kagan, 1991).

An alternative explanation moves from a focus on the relationship between organization and consumer to that between organization and employee and concerns the distribution of center resources to aspects of care that are associated with quality (Phillips, Howes, & Whitebook, 1992). For example, for-profit centers have been found to pay their staff significantly lower salaries than nonprofit centers (Whitebook et al., 1990), and staff salaries are associated with observed quality of caregiving (Whitebook et al., 1990) and staff turnover (Kontos & Stremmel, 1987). Children enrolled in for-profit centers, then, may not only experience lower levels of regulatable quality, but also more instability in the classroom. Teacher turnover certainly was an issue in the present study. Specifically, 48% (13 of 27) of the teachers in for-profit centers resigned or were dismissed within a five-month window spanning the period of data collection. In the nonprofit centers, the rate of turnover was only 16% (3 of 19 teachers). In most cases, teachers were not immediately replaced and classes had to be combined, resulting in larger class sizes and less favorable teacher-child ratios.

Differences also were found between nonprofit and profit centers in terms of teacher-child interaction. Specifically, children in nonprofit settings experienced more frequent interaction and higher levels of positive affect and traditional interaction from teachers, compared to children in for-profit settings. These findings amplify previous research, which suggests that teachers in nonprofit centers behave more sensitively to children (Kagan & Newton, 1989; Phillips et al., 1992), by extending beyond teachers' affective tone to how often teachers interact with children and the kinds of interactions they use. Variation in teacher-child interaction across program type may reflect distinctions in pedagogical emphasis. During

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

initial contacts, directors in the two nonprofit centers stressed the programs' educational aims. Teachers in these centers may have translated the program philosophy into their interactions with children, and therefore engaged children in high levels of instruction and conversation. Although curricula were not specified by teachers or directors, the high levels of instructive and conversational interactions of teachers in nonprofit centers appear to reflect a combination of didactic and child-centered approaches. In a didactic approach, information is presented to children in structured, group lessons, while a child-centered or open classroom approach involves teachers providing materials and support for children's choices (Frede, 1995). These pedagogical orientations lend themselves to a traditional style of interaction in which teachers provide children with high levels of direct instruction as well as informal conversation. Lower levels of traditional interaction may have occurred in for-profit centers for a number of reasons, including a lack of or alternative educational philosophy or more frequent classroom activities that did not facilitate teacher-child interaction (e.g., watching a videotape). Indeed, teachers in for-profit centers have been found to provide fewer developmentally appropriate activities (Phillips et al., 1992), which may correspond with low levels of instruction and conversation.

To conclude, these findings suggest that children's day care experiences vary depending on age, gender, or type of program. Older children may have more favorable experiences in terms of teachers with better qualifications who provide them with high levels of conversation accompanied by positive affect. Furthermore, boys' day care environments may be less positive than girls' in that boys experience more disciplinary interactions from teachers. Finally, the results of this study replicate and extend previous research concerning type of program by revealing that children in nonprofit centers not only experienced higher levels of regulatable quality, but also more frequent, meaningful, and positively-toned interactions from teachers, compared to children in for-profit settings.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

References

Block, J. H. (1976). Issues, problems, and pitfalls in assessing sex differences: A critical review of "The Psychology of Sex Differences." Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, 22, 283-308.

Coelen, C., Glantz, F., & Calore, D. (1979). Day care centers in the U.S.: A national profile, 1976-1977. Cambridge, MA: Abt.

Dickinson, D. K., & Smith, M. W. (1991). Preschool talk: Patterns of teacher-child interaction in early childhood classrooms. Journal of Research in Childhood Education, 6, 20-29.

Elicker, J., & Fortner-Wood, C. (1995). Adult-child relationships in early childhood programs. Young Children, 51, 69-78.

Fagot, B. I. (1984). Teacher and peer reactions to boys' and girls' play styles. Sex Roles, 11, 691-702.

File, N. (1994). Children's play, teacher-child interactions, and teacher beliefs in integrated early childhood programs. Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 9, 223-240.

Frede, E. C. (1995). The role of program quality in producing early childhood program benefits. The Future of Children, 5, 115-132.

Honig, A. S., Caldwell, B. M., & Tannenbaum, J. (1970). Patterns of information processing used by and with young children in a nursery school setting. Child Psychiatry and Human Development, 3, 216-230.

Honig, A. S., & Wittmer, D. S. (1982). Teachers and low-income toddlers in metropolitan day care. Early Child Development and Care, 10, 95-112.

Howes, C. (1983). Caregiver behavior in center and family day care. Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 4, 99-107.

Innes, R. B., Banspach, S. W., & Woodman, J. D. (1982). A comparison of the ecologies of day care centers and group day care homes for 4-year-olds. Early Childhood Development and Care, 10, 125-142.

Jacklin, C. N., & Macoby, E. E. (1978). Social behavior at thirty-three months in same-sex and mixed-sex dyads. Child Development, 49, 557-569.

Kagan, S. L. (1991). Examining profit and nonprofit child care: An odyssey of quality and auspices. Journal of Social Issues, 47, 87-104.

Kagan, S. L., & Newton, J. W. (1989). For-profit and nonprofit child care: Similarities and differences. Young Children, 45, 4-10.

Keyserling, M. D. (1972). Windows on day care: A report based on findings of the National Council of Jewish Women. New York: National Council of Jewish Women.

Kontos, S. J., & Stremmel, A. J. (1988). Caregivers' perceptions of working conditions in a child care environment. Early Childhood Reserach Quarterly, 3, 77-90.

Lally, J. R. (1995). The impact of child care policies and practices on infant/toddler identity formation. Young Children, 51, 58-68.

McCartney, K. (1984). Effect on quality of day care environment on children's language development. Developmental Psychology, 20, 244-260.

Pellegrino, M. L. M., & Scopesi, A. (1990). Structure and function of baby talk in a day care center. Journal of Child Language, 17, 101-114.

Phillips, D. A., Howes, C., & Whitebook, M. (1992). The social policy context of child care: Effects on quality. American Journal of Community Psychology, 20, 25-51.

Phillips, D. A., McCartney, K., & Scarr, S. (1987). Child care quality and children's social development. Development Psychology, 23, 537-543.

Steinkamp, M. W. (1990). The social concomitants of competitive and impatient/aggressive components of the Type A behavior pattern in preschool children: Peer responses and teacher utterances in a naturalistic setting. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 59, 1287-1295.

Tizard, B., Cooperman, O., Joseph, A., & Tizard, J. (1972). Environmental effects on language development: A study of young children in long-stay residential nurseries. Child Development, 43, 337-358.

Whitebook, M., Howes, C., & Phillips, D. (1989). Who cares? Child care teachers and the quality of care in America. Final Report of the National Child Care Staffing Study. Oakland, CA: Child Care Employee Project.